United Nations S/2004/243

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 March 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 22 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued on 18 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

04-28406 (E) 260304

Annex to the letter dated 22 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued on 18 March 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

1. The European Union continues to be firmly committed to peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the entire Great Lakes region in general. It commends the efforts made hitherto by the transition authorities to this end. It calls on the Congolese authorities to ensure that their actions keep within the letter and the spirit of the resolutions adopted by the inter-Congolese dialogue, the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement and the Transitional Constitution and to speed up the decision-taking process and the necessary reforms with a view to stabilizing the country as soon as possible. It urges those who have not yet embraced this rationale to forswear disorder and violence and unite in a common aim of peace and stability for the benefit of all citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2. For this reason the European Union is concerned by the delays in implementation of the transition programmes and by the political tensions and obstacles observed of late. It urges the components and groupings of the institutions to reaffirm their unwavering adherence to the principles of the transition. It also calls for effective implementation of the division of responsibilities laid down in the Pretoria Agreement and by the Transitional Constitution in a spirit of mutual cooperation. In particular, it stresses the importance of ensuring that there is a climate of calm and peacefulness for the population in this pre-electoral period.

3. The European Union considers that practical steps must be taken to restore the climate of confidence and good relations both within the transition institutions and within the presidential milieu. In view of the timetable laid down by the Transitional Constitution, the European Union reiterates the urgent need to adopt a basic law on the powers and the operation of the Independent Electoral Commission so that it can operate and be independent in keeping with the commitments entered into at Sun City; the necessity of setting up a conciliation committee on the various aspects of the electoral process; and the obligation to fulfil as soon as possible certain preconditions for the various operations to be carried out within the electoral process, such as the nationality law and the legal framework for electoral registration.

4. In these circumstances, the European Union calls for the urgent application of the necessary measures to restore the governing powers of the State and its authority over the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Priorities here include the establishment of a national administration, reconstruction, economic recovery and transparent management of State finances in a manner appropriate to the needs and aims of the transition.

5. It also calls for faster reform of the security sector, in the areas of reform of the justice system and the police as well as the integration of all levels of the army, in parallel with the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Appointment of the national disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration coordinator and budgetary and logistic planning of the integrated units to be deployed are indispensable in this context.

6. The European Union is very concerned by the renewed increase in security and political tension in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is especially shocked by the continuing violations of human rights and the atrocities inflicted on the civilian population in Ituri, in the Kivu provinces and in Katanga, in particular the rape carried out systematically and with impunity by the increasing number of armed bands originating in the militias operating in Ituri, in the Kivu provinces and in Katanga.

7. It urges the transition institutions to take every possible measure to re-establish State authority over the whole country; it calls upon all protagonists on the ground to show consideration for the population and commit themselves irrevocably to the transition. With reference to the recent incidents in Bukavu and Kinshasa, the European Union calls on all sides to refrain from making any statements that could ignite ethnic tensions.

8. The European Union reiterates its support for the regional conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region and calls on the Congo authorities to play a full part in it. The Union also attaches considerable importance to the restoration of confidence and to normalization of bilateral relations between States in that region. In that regard, it calls on all political leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to work constructively for the restoration of peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

9. Lastly, the European Union wishes to express its full support for the activities of MONUC and for the work of the International Committee in Support of the Transition.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.